

# Stoke Newington SDA Church

Sabbath Morning Programme 18<sup>th</sup> April 2020

with

*Elder Cheryl Stewart-Wedderburn*

## Theme: In Times Like These

**(Audio version available)**

As we focus on today's topic, I pray that you will all be encouraged, irrespective of what is happening in the world around us. May Jesus become more real to you each day as you take the time to know Him and make Him the Anchor of your soul.

### Hymns of meditation

*(even if you do not know the tune of the songs, please read and focus on the words)*

SDAH 595 – Let Every Lamp Be Burning

SDAH 598 – Watch, Ye Saints

SDAH 593 – In Times Like These

### Key Text

Psalm 146:3-5 (MSG)

Don't put your life in the hands of experts  
who know nothing of life, of *salvation* life.  
Mere humans don't have what it takes;  
when they die, their projects die with them.  
Instead, get help from the God of Jacob,  
put your hope in God and know real blessing!

### Message – "In Times Like These"

We hear it on the news every single day – the coronavirus, covid-19, "we are living in unprecedented times". A tiny virus, something so small that we can't even see it with the naked eye, is causing absolute havoc not only in this country but practically all over the World. Everyone, whether directly or indirectly, has or will be affected by this pandemic. And there is absolutely nothing that we can do as individuals to stop it except "stay at home" until it passes.

Some people are finding this situation very depressing and disheartening. But we have hope. In times like these we have hope! Jesus is our only Hope but He's all the hope we'll

ever need in this world of trouble. Be encouraged! This coronavirus pandemic did not catch God by surprise. Nothing in this life ever catches God by surprise because HE IS GOD. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and last; and beside Him there is none (Revelation 22:13, Isaiah 44:6) God knew all the stages of our lives before we were even born (Psalms 139:16). We serve a mighty God. Nothing is too hard for Him so we have nothing to fear in times like these.

The song says,

*In times like these you need a Saviour...you need an anchor...*

*Be very sure your anchor holds and grips the solid Rock!*

*This Rock is Jesus... the only One!*

*In times like these you need the Bible*

*In times like these O be not idle*

Yes, ***in times like these you need a Saviour***. Who is *your* saviour? Who or what are you placing your trust in? Is it your pastor, elder, your spouse, parents, best friend, prime minister, or is it your bank account? Psalm 146:3-5 advises us not to place our trust in mere humans because they do not have what it takes. When they die, all their projects, plans, and promises die with them. Instead, place your trust and seek help from God. Put your hope in the Creator of Heaven and Earth, then you will know what real blessings are!

Make Jesus your Saviour today and for always.

***In times like these you need an anchor***. Who or what keeps you steadfast in your spiritual and moral beliefs? What keeps you firm in your faith when you're at work, church, home or when you're all alone with no one watching? Is it fear of the law, the consequences, or is it your loyalty to the God Who died to save you? Who or what keeps you living an abundant life, no matter what is going on in the world around you? Hebrews 6:19 tells us that Jesus is our hope, an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast. Jesus is the unbreakable spiritual lifeline to God the Father Who is the Solid Rock – just and fair; His ways are absolutely perfect, You can always depend on Him without exception! (Deuteronomy 32:4)

Make Jesus your Anchor to The Solid Rock today and for always.

***In times like these you need the Bible***. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that ALL of the Bible is inspired by God and is useful for showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes and training us to live God's way. It empowers us. How can you be confident and claim God's promises if we don't know what He promised us in His Word? The Bible was written to encourage and teach us, and most importantly so we can learn what God is like Who He is. In times like these, we need God's Words to guide us in this World of distractions. Read the Word to keep you focussed.

Make the reading of God's Word a regular activity in your life today and for always.

***In times like these O be not idle!*** Procrastination is the thief of time! Time waits on no man, woman, boy or girl. No matter who you are, what you own, what you do; no matter how

much money you have, whether you're rich or poor – you cannot buy or earn another day of life. And Matthew 6 tells us that worrying about life will not add another day to it either. We are simply told to seek God's Kingdom and then everything else will fall into place. Time is a blessing. We must use it wisely. Unfortunately, time lost can never be regained. However, we can make the most of what we do have now. With this coronavirus we are now forced to STAY AT HOME. While you stay at home, you should have more time on your hands.

Use this time firstly to build up your relationship with God because this is the only way we will make it in the end of time. Many of us have neglected our Bible study and prayer time. Now is the time to get this back on track. Some of us have been going to church for years and we still don't know God. We only know *about* Him. To know God is to love God and when we know God we have everlasting life. A personal relationship with God should be our ultimate goal. I recommend a book by Morris Venden called, "To know God – a 5-day plan" to help get you on your way.

Secondly, we must use the time to build on or re-build our relationships with our families and long lost friends. We can use technology to share words of encouragement with them which will be readily digested in a world hungering for hope in times like these.

Thirdly, please do not use this time just for lazing around and catching up on BBC iplayer or Netflix. I'm not saying you can't relax and have hobbies, but please just make sure that you have your priorities in order. What's the point of gaining the whole world and losing your own soul?

Time is definitely running out. I feel impressed that God is giving us this "stay-at-home" time to catch up with Him, so that we can truly know Him before it is eternally too late. God is holding back the winds of strife for us because we're not ready. He loves us and wants to save us. We can't keep Him waiting forever. Please use your time wisely as a matter of eternal life and death.

Make the most the most of the time God has blessed you with, especially in these Last Days.

I pray that when things return to "normal" and this pandemic ends, that you will continue with your relationship with God and in your Bible studies. We will need them for the times to come. Be encouraged! God is not dead. He is preparing us for His soon return. He does not wish that any of us should perish, but that all of us may repent and be saved to live with Him in beautiful Heaven. Are you ready? Be very sure that you'll be ready in time, for time is running out and time waits on no one.

## Closing Prayer

My prayer for you today is that in times like these, you will be confident that Jesus is your Saviour, because you need Him as your Anchor. May God have mercy on us all during this pandemic and in the days to come. May He fill us with His Spirit, and deepen our determination to use this time wisely to strengthen our relationship with Him. It is my prayer that in times like these, God will inspire us to reach out in creative ways to the unchurched, to our families and friends who have not yet chosen Jesus as their Saviour. And don't try to fix your problems, just fix your eyes on Jesus! And now we give God all the glory

and praise for giving us this time, time that we can spend in our homes, getting our lives in order before He returns.

Be encouraged! Jesus is the Rock of your Salvation! He loves you so spend more time with Him and His Word today, especially in times like these.

May God bless and keep you strong and faithful until the end. Amen.

### Closing Song

SDAH 534 – Will Your Anchor Hold?

*May the Lord watch between me and thee while we're absent one from another. Amen*

**Sunset Time 8:03 pm**